108614 - Going around to different mosques in order to have more focus (khushoo’) in prayer

the question

I want to know how sound this hadeeth is: “Let each one of you pray in the mosque that is closest to him and not go around to different mosques.” What should we say to the one who goes around to different mosque in order to have more focus and presence of mind in prayer, without missing ‘Isha’ prayer?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

As far as I know, there is a difference of opinion concerning the authenticity of this hadeeth. If we assume that it is sound, it may be interpreted as meaning that this applies if doing that may lead to the people abandoning the mosque that is closest to them. Otherwise it is well known that the Sahaabah (may Allah be pleased with them) used to come to the Prophet's Mosque in order to pray behind the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). In fact, Mu’aadh (may Allah be pleased with him) used to pray ‘Isha’ with the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), then he would go back to his people and lead them in prayer, even though it was later.

If a person frequents the mosque because of good recitation, and because that good recitation of the imam helps him to focus in prayer, there is nothing wrong with that. Otherwise, if there is the fear of any problem resulting from that, or there is the fear that this may be regarded as disrespect to the imam of the local mosque, if he (the person who goes to another mosque) is a prominent figure and his going away from the local mosque to another mosque may be regarded as undermining the position of the imam, then in this case we say that he should pay attention to the potential bad consequences of this action and avoid doing it.

And Allah knows best.